Declassified and Approved For Release 2012/01/25 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000504150020-8

APPEARED
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WASHINGTON TIMES
10 October 1985

Analyst leaked photos to stir U.S., jury told

By Rita McWilliams
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BALTIMORE — A former U.S. Navy intelligence analyst, on trial for allegedly leaking U.S. reconaissance photos of nuclear-powered Soviet aircraft carriers, told investigators he wanted to stir up Americans to call for an increased defense budget, a Naval investigator testified yesterday.

David Swindle, a Naval Investigative Service agent, told a federal court jury that Samuel Loring Morison admitted he had sent the photos to the world's most prestigious military magazine, Jane's Defence Weekly, because he thought the public should know the magnitude of the Soviet's military buildup.

After the photos appeared in Jane's Defence Weekly in August 1984, Mr. Morison, 40, of Crofton, Md., was arrested Oct. 1, 1984, at Dulles International Airport as he was about to step on a plane to England. Mr. Morison was charged with transmitting secret documents and theft of government property. It was then that he admitted cutting off the classified seal on the photographs and sending them to Jane's Defence Weekly, investigators testified.

If convicted, Mr. Morison faces up to 40 years in prison and a $40,000 fine.

Government prosecuters said Mr. Morison, grandson of the nation's most famous naval historian, leaked the photos and lied to his superiors at the Naval Intelligence Support Center in Suitland, Md., because he was trying to get a full-time job at Jane's Publishing Co.

But when Mr. Swindle asked Mr. Morison if it was his way of educating the American public, "Sam just looked up to me and said, 'You hit it,' " Mr. Swindle said during the second day of the trial.

A top CIA official, Richard Hineman, the agency's deputy director for science and technology, said the photographs published in the August 1984 edition of Jane's were potentially harmful to U.S. interests because they showed U.S. spy capabilities as of 1984.

The photographs, taken by a KH-11 satellite, confirmed the use of the reconnaissance satellites which monitor Soviet compliance with arms limitations agreements, Mr. Hineman said.

The Soviets already had been sold a manual about the KH-11 system in 1976, before the system was in operation, Mr. Hineman said. Pictures taken by KH-11 satellites of a Soviet bomber had been published in 1981 by Aviation Week, he said.

The case is the second in U.S. history in which a government employee has been arrested for leaking U.S. secrets to the press. The first involved Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked U.S. war plans that came to be known as the Pentagon Papers to The New York Times in 1971. That case was dismissed in 1973.

Mr. Morison's confession had been ruled inadmissible by U.S. District Judge Joseph H. Young last March because he had admitted taking the photographs after he had asked for a lawyer but before one was present.

Defense lawyers apparently allowed the confession to be used because Mr. Morison had made his admission to investigators so that his motives for getting out information about the Soviet military buildup would be introduced during the trial.

John Lewis, one of Mr. Morison's supervisors, said Mr. Morison denied sending the photographs, and that Mr. Morison had asked to take a week's compensatory time off to visit England to interview for a job at Jane's Defence Weekly.

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